Statement of Professor Day

To the Investigating Committee of the San Francisco Theological Seminary

Dear Brethren:

I submit herewith a statement containing my reply to the allegations touching the views and teachings of the incumbent of the Chair of Old Testament Interpretation which were laid before the Board in a memorial and petition and which were referred to you for investigation. In a recent interview with you, which was held at your request, I have fully and frankly stated my position regarding all the points that were raised. In the following statement I confine myself to the specific points contained in the said memorial and petition.

It is asserted that I hold and teach:

1. That God never interrupted the orderly workings of nature.

2. That accounts of miracles in the Bible are to be so explained that the occurrences may be regarded as having taken place according to known laws of nature—and

3. That if this cannot be done, the accounts are to be regarded as false.

4. That the expression, "her seed," in the third of Genesis means the human race.

5. That Isaiah ix:6, 7, does not refer to the birth of Christ.

6. That during the ages before Christ no one had any idea of the coming of such a Savior as the Christ of the New Testament.

7. That passages in the Old Testament which are regarded as predictions concerning Jesus Christ were not really such.

8. That passages in the New Testament which are regarded as teaching that Christ's life and work were fulfilment of prophecy are either misinterpreted or spurious.

9. That the Pentateuch was not written by Moses.

10. That the Levitical law came into existence after the Exile.

11. That the Book of Daniel was written 165 B. C., about four hundred years after the time of Daniel.

12. That the stories of Jonah, of the three Hebrews in the furnace, of Daniel in the den of lions, are parables.

In order that the views hereinafter stated may be seen in their proper relation to the central object of our faith, I desire to say that I hold and teach:

(1) That Jesus Christ is divine—very God of very God—as well as human; that he is the Son of God in a unique sense, as no mere man can be said to be: and

(2) That he holds a central place in all God's revelations to men. When God spoke in old time unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, He was preparing the way for that fuller revelation of himself which he made in the latter days in his Son, who was the very image of his substance.

1. MIRACLES

I do not assert that God never interrupted the orderly workings of nature, or that the miracles in the Bible are to be explained according to the known laws of nature, or that the accounts are to be regarded as false.

I believe in miracles. To say that God can not do what he will in his own world is less complimentary than to call him an "absentee God." He works with the freedom of a sovereign. His freedom is not curtailed but is rather expressed by the orderly workings of nature; but it finds expression also in those extraordinary acts of His will and power which we call miraculous.

II. PREDICTION.

I hold that prediction is one of the main characteristics of Old Testament prophecy.

The Messianic prophecies embody Jehovah's gracious purpose and promise of salvation.

In the early stages of Hebrew history the full meaning of these was not understood; Jehovah had to do with Israel what Jesus did with his disciples—reserve to a future time what they could not then bear.

If, as Calvin and Delitzsch think, the term "her seed" in Gen. iii meant for the men of that time the race as a whole, that need not hinder us from regarding the passage as Messianic, since the race culminates in Christ the Head of redeemed humanity.

I hold that in the Messianic prophecies (which include Isaiah ix:6, 7) the immediate reference may be, and usually is, to some so-called typical person, e. g., the Davidic king (present or future), or the anointed priest, or even to the nation as a whole, or to the spiritual nucleus of the nation; and that this may be all that the words meant for the time being, when interpreted from the view-point of the prophet and his contemporaries. When interpreted from the view-point of the New Testament, these prophecies are only fully satisfied when they find complete fulfilment in the advent and redeeming work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the goal of prophecy and its final interpreter.

In interpreting Scripture the view-point is all important. It is true that before Christ came no one had an adequate conception of what the future Messiah should be. But after he came men realized (not at first, for the disciples were slow of heart, but after Pentecost at least) that the life and work of Christ were the fulfilment of prophecy. As the risen sun blots out the stars, so for us Christians the Advent of Christ renders obsolete the original meanings which, meager as they were, the prophecies bore for the men to whom they were first given, and from which they derived comfort and hope, since they were adapted to their needs and were level with their understanding of Jehovah's purposes.

III. CRITICAL QUESTIONS.

Regarding the Pentateuch, the Levitical law, Isaiah, Jonah, &c., I hold:

First, that all such matters are proper subjects of inquiry, and that the Christian scholar may claim liberty of investigation. He has a right to hold the view that commends itself to his best judgment when all available evidence has been examined. An evangelical Christian may hold any of the views mentioned in the memorial, touching

these points; they would not affect the essentials of his faith. Furthermore, as we all know, many evangelical scholars do hold such views. Let me cite the significant article in the January number of the Homiletic Review by Professor Zenos of the McCormick Seminary, entitled "The Established Results of Old Testament Study," in proof of this statement.

Secondly, I hold it the duty of a teacher in this present time to help his students to understand the questions that have been raised regarding the books of the Old Testament. My habit is to encourage them to study both sides of the question in every case and to endeavor to reach an independent conclusion. Above all I endeavor to make it clear that candor and Christian charity are in the highest degree essential for any who seek to labor in this field of inquiry.

Allow me to say, in concluding this statement, that I have no sympathy with unbelieving rationalism. But not all modern critics are rationalists nor are their views all destructive of the Bible or of the Christian faith. There is an increasing amount of reverent and believing criticism which dares to do its work thoroughly because its motives are pure and its methods worthy. Such criticism may lead us to change some of our former views respecting the Bible, but the Bible itself remains the very Word of God to reveal a living Christ, to establish and confirm our faith and to inspire us to holy living. Very sincerely yours,

Thomas F. Day.

San Anselmo, Cal., April 20, 1907.

Conclusion of Committee's Report

We have entered at length into this part of our report because we desire that the Board, as well as the petitioners, should feel that we have made our investigation as complete and thorough as was in our power, and because we feel that it should be widely known upon how slender and unsubstantial a basis the structure of criticism of Dr. Day's teaching has been found by us to rest.

Finally, and most important of all, we submitted the various allegations made in the petition to Dr. Day and invited from him a statement in regard to them. In addition we had a full and frank conference with Dr. Day in which the several items in his statement were discussed in order that there might be no possible misunderstanding on our part of its meaning.

From a careful study of this statement, as well as from our personal inquiry, we find that the allegations in the petition as to teachings on the part of Dr. Day which are in conflict with the standards of our church are without foundation. We find from Dr. Day's statement that certain allegations in the petition are true, viz: Those referring to the authorship of the Pentateuch and of Isaiah, to the dates of the giving of the Levitical Law, and of the Book of Daniel and to the interpretation of the Book of Jonah, but as all these are, in our judgment, legitimate subjects for difference of opinion, and as Dr. Day's views and teachings regarding them do not in any way impugn the position he holds, in common with our church as to the authority of Scripture, we would regard it as an unnecessary interference with liberty in matters non-essential to recommend any action in regard to them.

On the doctrines of the Deity of Christ, Miracles, Revelation, Inspiration, and Prophecy, Dr. Day is sound to the core. From the testimony of his students we are convinced that Dr. Day's teaching, far from lessening reverence for the Bible as the Word of God, has enhanced that reverence in them. We find that his doctrine and teaching are far removed from any mere rationalism, and that he steadily and earnestly holds up Jesus Christ as the very Son of God and the Savior of men. We have found nothing that calls for any abatement on the part of the Board of their confidence in Dr. Day as a scholar and as an instructor of candidates for the ministry of our church, and we have found much that calls for a fresh assertion of this confidence by the Board.

William Martin,
E. E. Baker,
Wales L. Palmer.

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